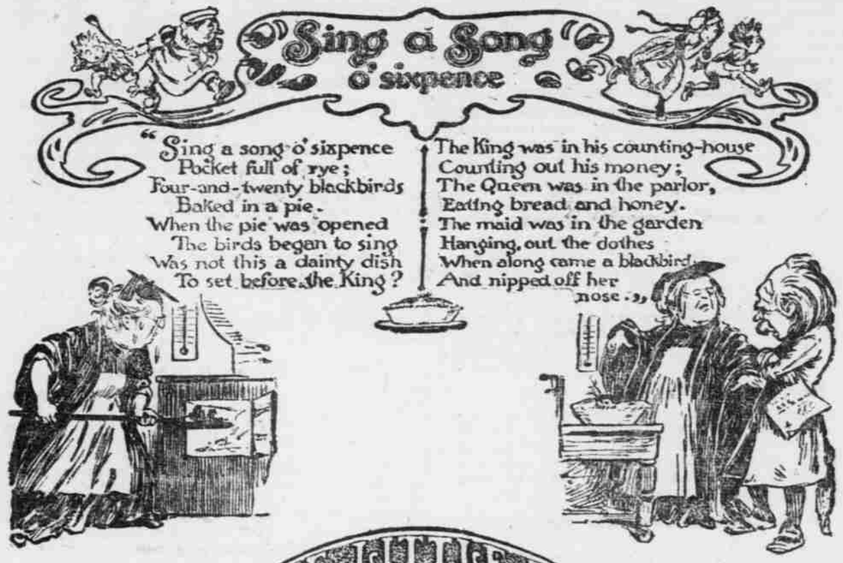
FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL

Sing a Song o' Sixpence



"Sing a song o' sixpence
Pocket full of rye;
Four-and-twenty blackbirds
Baked in a pie.
When the pie was opened
The birds began to sing
Was not this a dainty dish
To set before the King?

The King was in his counting-house
Counting out his money;
The Queen was in the parlor,
Eating bread and honey.
The maid was in the garden
Hanging out the clothes
When along came a blackbird
And nipped off her nose."

"I love little pussy, her coat is so warm,
And if I don't hurt her, she'll do me no harm.
I'll sit by the fire and give her some food,
And pussy will love me because I am good."

Our Hearts Pure From Evil

By Gabrielle E. Jackson.

YOU haven't average understanding. You are absolutely hopeless. You do not wish to study, so what can be expected? You will not work." Each word fell with distinctness, precision, monotony, and was as uncompromising as the steady drip, drip of icy water during a February thaw.

"But, Miss Joy, I am not allowed to do any work at home. All——"

"That will do. This is neither the time nor place for explanations, and I do not care to hear them. I have no patience with people who say they *cannot* do this or that; it is usually, *will not*. You should have done this supplementary work. I shall mark you very low for having failed to do it."

"Would that be fair to me, Miss Joy? I knew all of the regular lesson perfectly, but this work to be done at home was impossible for me—"

But again the girl's voice was interrupted by the icy tones of the literature teacher, who uttered the one word: "Silence!" She had, however, the grace to drop her eyes before the big brown ones which looked into her own so steadily, and with such a rebuke in their clear, liquid depths that her own cold, steely ones were forced to shrink before that gaze.

The girl turned from the teacher's desk and, walking quietly to her own, sat down and began preparing a subject for the following day. Miss Joy opened her roll-book to mark the girls for the lesson just recited, while the class busied itself with some examination papers which had not been completed the previous day and were to be handed in that morning. A number of these papers lay upon the teacher's desk, and when she had finished her roll-book she began to examine them. It was close to the Easter holidays and all must be finished before Wednesday of the coming week. Miss Joy's left hand kept up a steady nervous tattoo upon her desk as her right scored with a blue pencil, one paper after another, and the silence of the room was broken only by the scratching of the girls' pens as they ran across their papers.

Miss Joy was a small, angular woman of forty or more years, rigidly erect and unbending both in figure and disposition. She ruled by "discipline" and "dignity," she said, and never did human being personify the former as did Miss Joy, although she frequently lost sight of the latter for lack of self-control. She had been teaching many years, and never yet had a word of affection been spoken in connection with her name. One generation of girls followed another through the school, but never was an "old girl" known to speak a kindly word of Miss Joy or give the slightest indication of a warm sentiment for her. Her influence upon the girls in her classes varied with the temperaments of the individuals. Some feared, some hated, some despised her. Others lived in a constant state of rebellion, with a wild desire to "get even at all hazards." The better bred, more self-possessed girls rigidly endured her. The sunny-souled, happy, sensitive, high-principled, delicately organized ones experienced a form of exquisite torture when brought in contact with a nature so diametrically opposed to their own.

Among the latter type was Lois Chilton. She had entered the school that year, coming from another distant town, and a greater contrast between her present unhappy surroundings and her former delightful ones it would be difficult to imagine. A few years before she had broken down from overstudy, and school had to be given up for eighteen months. Then came a year's work in Westleigh where the raveled threads were so happily knitted together again, and now, at sixteen, she was a pupil in the Appleton School, where she was learning to understand a phase of life hitherto undreamed of. Sunny of soul, lighthearted, winning, quick to see the humorous side of everything, generous, affectionate, was Lois Chilton. She went through life finding it well worth living, and shedding sunshine for all who would take it. She had a fine mind, worked conscientiously and comprehendingly, concentrating all her efforts upon her subject and letting it sink in. She was truthful as truth itself, scorned subterfuge and meanness, and if in the wrong, was always ready to admit it and "take her medicine" as she expressed it.

But "medicine," except in the form of a tonic, plenty of outdoor exercise and her gymnastic work, as well as a careful avoidance of overstudy, was never needed, and her intercourse with her other instructors, her parents and older people was that of the most delightful good-fellowship. They were, of course, her friends. She expected them to be so, why not? That an older person could entertain a grudging animosity toward a younger one was a condition of things quite beyond her grasp. But the year now drawing to its close had taught her much, and she was learning to distrust one of those "grown-ups" whom she had always been taught to trust and respect.

Why Miss Joy had singled out Lois Chilton for the special object of her acrimony it would be hard to explain, unless it was the natural antagonism of such a nature as hers for its exact opposite. That she had made life a burden for the girl for seven months was past a doubt, and unless some sort of halt was soon called the outcome was liable to prove serious for her pupil.

When she was placed in the school, Lois' physical condition had been made known to the principal, who, in turn, explained to her teachers that Lois would take only certain subjects, and limit the amount of work to that which could be prepared and recited during the five school hours, leaving her entirely free afterward for the outdoor exercise and physical training so essential. Miss Joy was fully aware of the conditions, but chose to discredit the need, and never for a single moment ceased to criticise the amount of work the girl did. She seemed to take a malicious delight in giving her just a little more than it was possible for her to do in the allotted time. Lessons long in themselves were made more taxing by supplementary reading, which could only be done after school hours. That she could not give the child a downright failure so long as the regular lessons were correctly recited she knew very well, but she could, and did, mark her disgracefully low, and taunt her with a lack of interest and inability; wound her by unjust accusations and irritate her almost beyond endurance. Day after day was this done, until poor Lois dreaded the literature class. More than once when on her way to school in the morning had she offered up a pathetic little prayer that "Miss Joy may be good-natured to-day," only to find Miss Joy more on edge than ever.

As Miss Joy worked upon the examination papers this morning, her lips were compressed until only a thin line was visible to indicate them. Presently she glanced toward Lois' desk.

"Why are you not working upon your examination paper, Lois Chilton?" she demanded.

"I haven't——" began Lois.

"You haven't what?" broke in Miss Joy.

"You——"

"Never mind *me*. I wish to know why *you* are not working as the other girls are? Answer that question and say nothing else."

"I gave you——" when again that metallic voice interrupted.

But poor Lois Chilton had been goaded just a little too far that morning, and no amount of training can be counted upon to withstand the last straw. Looking Miss Joy squarely in the eyes, her own fairly blazing, but her mouth tightly closed, as though to repress words struggling to force themselves from her lips, she rose from her seat, shoulders squared and head erect, to walk straight up to Miss Joy's desk.

Like most cowardly, nagging natures, Miss Joy seemed actually to shrivel as the tall girl bore down upon her in her righteous wrath. For some time the teacher had striven by every artifice of her cold, vindictive nature to draw from Lois Chilton some word of impertinence or rebellious act; to provoke her into some discourtesy which would justify sending the girl to the principal's office. Yet never during all those miserable months had she succeeded in so doing. Even when Miss Joy was standing, Lois towered head and shoulders above her, and now as the small woman shrank into herself, the girl seemed a veritable personification of outraged justice coming to claim her rights.

She paused directly in front of Miss Joy, and said in a tone which her teacher had never before heard from those lips:

"Miss Joy, will you be good enough to open that drawer?" pointing to the upper drawer of the teacher's desk.

Without a word, but with a slightly trembling hand, Miss Joy complied. In the drawer lay a neatly written examination paper bearing Lois' name.

"Is not that the paper you wish, Miss Joy?"

"Certainly; certainly. How came it here? What do you mean by taking the liberty of placing it in my drawer?" Miss Joy was recovering herself, and had discovered a mare's nest.

"One moment, if you please, Miss Joy." The clear voice never faltered. "Do you recall that my paper was the only one completed when the period bell rang yesterday, and, at your own request, I handed it to you? You hastily opened that drawer and laid it there. And there is the period bell to end this recitation. I have the pleasure to wish you good morning, Miss Joy."

She drew back from the desk, let fall the hand that had been pointing to her examination paper, and stepped into her place in the line which the girls had already formed at the ringing of the bell.

"You are insolent! Insolent!" cried Miss Joy, beside herself with passion. "I shall instantly report you. I shall make this examination so difficult for you that it will be impossible for you to pass! I shall be unsparing in my criticism of your paper! Do you hear me?"

But not another word did Lois Chilton utter as the class marched from the literature room; for the rules of the school brooked no delay once a period bell had rung.

An hour later she turned the corner of the street upon which her home stood. All the pretty color had vanished from her cheeks, her eyes looked heavy and dull, her lips had a sad little droop, and her step lacked its usual buoyancy. While still far down the block she saw her mother waiting for her upon their piazza, as she had never missed waiting since Lois began school at nine years of age. That little meeting each day had much to do with Lois' sunshine, and this year it had been a mighty safeguard against disaster for Mrs. Chilton was by no means blind to the prevailing condition of affairs. She had watched with misgivings the effect it was having upon Lois, physically, mentally and morally, for this daughter was too precious to be marred by outer influences.

The hand which Lois placed in her mother's was icy cold, but the lips which rested against her cheek were hot and feverish. A shadow passed over Mrs. Chilton's face, to be instantly replaced by a bright smile, as she said:

"Come in to luncheon, Sweetheart; Katy has some delicious little rolls for us."

Instantly Lois' expression changed. Flinging her arms about her mother, she nestled her head in her neck, and cried in a little quivering voice, which told all too plainly of the nerve strain to which she had been submitted.

"What a precious, precious little mother you are! You always have something happy to say, and seem to know when I most need it. *You* couldn't roll me in a wet blanket, could you? And you whisk off those anyone else dares wrap me in, don't you? I couldn't live a single minute without you to brace me up!"

Mrs. Chilton laughed a happy little laugh as she replied:

"Isn't that what mothers were made for? Now sit down to your luncheon, and while you are enjoying your rolls I'll tell you some pleasant news. Papa is going to take us to Lakewood for Easter. We start on Monday."

Lois let fall the roll she held to clasp her hands in rapture and cry:

"How perfectly splendid! A whole week outdoors and *no* Miss Joy! Oh, Mumsey, it has been an awful day, and I lost my temper, said dreadful things, and am going to lose my Lit. Exam., for Miss Joy said so. And I worked so hard," and the pretty head wagged despondently.

"No, dear, not your examination, because I have decided to withdraw you from the school. You will not return after Easter. I think the tax upon your strength has been a little too severe. I have written to Miss Appleton giving my reasons, and have requested her to send me all your papers, etc., by mail on Monday. After you have had a little holiday, we will read and study together each morning, and you will lose very little. As for the outcome of the examination, you are not to worry over it. You have worked faithfully, and no one can do better than do their best."

"I have, oh, Mumsey, I have!" cried Lois. "I don't feel a bit scared about anything but the Lit., and Miss Joy said today that she would make that impossible so I dare say it isn't any use to hope for anything there."

Lois did not see the quick squaring of her mother's shoulders or the shutting together of the lips, so exactly as she herself had done not two hours before. Then Mrs. Chilton continued:

"I am delighted with the progress you have made this year, and I think you have earned your holiday. At any rate I cannot spare my unshiny daughter, to replace her with an overwrought, nervous one."

Just then the waitress went to answer the doorbell, and presently returned to say:

"Please, Mrs. Chilton, there's a man wishing to speak with you."

Mrs. Chilton rose from the table and went to the door. A trolley-car official raised his hat as he asked:

"Do you own a big red dog, lady?"

"Why, yes, we do. What is the matter? What has he done?"

"Well, I can't rightly say as he's done anythin'. It's more like what he *won't* do. He's squatted himself in the very middle of the track, and sits there like he owned it and all the earth, too, and unless I knock him into cocked hat I don't see how I'm goin to run my car. 'Course, it's only trial trips we're makin' yet, but in a few days we'll be a-runnin' reg'lar, and I don't want to start out by killin' no valuable dog, and gettin run in for it. So I wisht you'd please call him home."

Mrs. Chilton collapsed upon the hall settee to laugh. Then she called to Lois: "Run out and persuade Don that the trolley company *does* own that property now, Lois, and that we have received full value for it. Assure him that the lot is now theirs, *not* ours, and he is under no obligation to mount guard over it."

The man smiled broadly, tipped his hat once more, and turned to follow Lois, who fled, laughing, down the steps to bring home the big Irish setter who could not be reconciled to the new order of things upon what he supposed was his mistress's property.

Don was a character. During the previous summer he had stood beside his mistress while a neighbor gathered for her a splendid bunch of scarlet geraniums and presented it with a graceful little speech. The next day, and the next, and the next, Don laid a fine geranium plant, roots and all, at Mrs. Chilton's feet, and looking into her face with as near an approach to their neighbor's smile as he could manage, asked in his dog language, "Wasn't that thoughtful of me?"

The neighbor did not agree. Neither did Mrs. Chilton feel especially gratified when Don undertook to keep the larder supplied with poultry after having observed the manner in which the gardener put an end to the life of a hapless chicken and then carried it to the cook. Don could not talk, but he could and *did* think as he proved later.

The following Monday, Lois' papers were not sent home. She had passed in every subject excepting English Literature. That paper was scored from end to end, every defect being magnified to the last degree. Her lips quivered as she looked at it over her mother's shoulder, for many of the points criticised were those upon which Miss Joy had insisted earlier in the year, but had afterward entirely forgotten. Under the circumstances it was impossible for her to pass.

A few hours later the family and Don were speeding toward Lakewood. Holy Week passed in all its hush of peace and rest. Many a weary heart and body had sought the soothing influence of Lakewood for moral and physical restoration. Many a tired brain was resting among the tall, whispering pines whose beautiful, arching boughs had given the first hint of Gothic architecture long years before. Here in the silent wood, which were "God's first temples," restless spirits were calmed and fractious ones found peace and discouraged ones renewed hope.

Easter was very late that year, and in this sheltered inland region the foliage had already advanced more than elsewhere, and all the world was a tender green with pink and white hints of future blossoming.

Early Easter morning, Lois and Don stole away from the hotel and hurried off to a remote bit of woodland bordering a lake. From afar came the softened sound of church bells ringing for early service.

As she walked through the beautiful pine wood, filled with life-giving, aromatic odors, and the glory of the early sunlight, Lois' thoughts were busy with recent happenings, and her heart filled with the spirit of the hour. Presently she spoke aloud, and Don paused to look up into her face as though to ask: "Did you speak to me?"

"No, it's all right, old fellow," she said. "I'm just having a little powwow with Lois Chilton, and trying to make her forget old scores to-day. It's hard work, sometimes, Don, do you know that?" she asked, as she dropped upon a fallen pine log and took the dog's head in her hands. Don looked at her with almost human intelligence. "Yes," she continued, looking absently out over the crystal waters of the lake, now growing in the sunlight, "dreadfully, dreadfully hard, for I never came so near hating anybody before, Don. I truly never, never did, and today I don't want to have a single unkind thought of anybody if I can help it; not even of Miss Joy. But she has hurt me cruelly so many times because she has been so unjust. Listen to the bells, Don. Do you know what they are saying?

"Our hearts be pure from evil,
That we may see aright,"

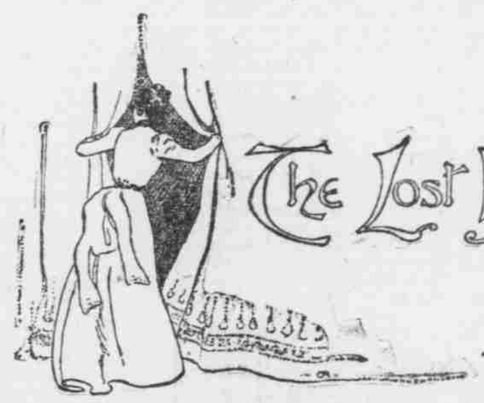
sang Lois, softly. "Listen, Don!"

As she spoke the last words a piercing shriek came across the water from the further side of the lake, where two rowboats were moored to a stake close to the water's edge. The dog bounded to his feet as though it were the cry to which he was bidden to harken. Lois glanced quickly in the direction as the cry was repeated, and saw a woman fall between the boats as she attempted to step from one to the other. Lois echoed the cry as she sprang to her feet and started to run around the border of the lake to the figure struggling in the water. As she sped along, she cried to Don:

"On, Don! On! Catch her! Catch her!"

By the way Lois was forced to go the distance was great, and had the rescue depended upon her the victim's chances would have been small. But Don could cut corners, and with a comprehending bark he plunged into the water and swam with all his might. Not a moment too soon did he reach the woman, who had now ceased to struggle, and, grasping her by her coat collar, he held on for dear life as he strove to swim with his burden. But the boats impeded him and he could only hold her head above the water until Lois arrived, breathless, for she was only a slender little girl, and none too strong. As she hurried down the bank to the mooring, she gave a gasp of astonishment, and for a moment mistrusted her own sight, for the pallid, upturned face with its closed eyes and drenched locks was that of Miss Joy. Not one second did she wait to take breath, but bounded into one of the boats, and reaching down, drew the unconscious woman into it, then fell upon a thwart faint and exhausted. When aid, summoned by the intelligent Don's barks and whines, arrived from a nearby cottage, Lois sat holding her late enemy's hand in her lap, and Miss Joy, once more conscious, was looking up into the girl's face with an expression in which gratitude, shame, and a dawning wondering admiration were sadly mingled.

To help save a life—for Don was given his full meed of praise for his share in the matter—and to turn an enemy into a friend was Lois Chilton's pleasant record for that Easter. Nor did the good stop there, for the Appleton students were amazed to find a new Miss Joy when the Easter holidays ended—a Miss Joy who was actually human almost gentle, in her changed personality, and who, by degrees grew away from her old, hard self until it was evident that a miracle had been indeed wrought that wonderful Easter, and a nature had been made anew and for the better.



He's not in the toy-box,
Nor under the chair,
Nor hid in the curtain—
I've looked everywhere.

Where is my baby?
Does any one see?
Help me to find him;
Where can he be?

Just a moment ago
He was here, I know well.
Oh, where is my baby—
Can any one tell?

Dear me! Here he is!
Who'd have thought that behind
Those little pink fingers
A baby I'd find!

A. B. Crandell.

HIS HERO.

By Jennie S. Houston.

By Jennie S. Houston
Once I drived out with my pa
Where the Brices lives, an' ma.
We took her along wiv us,
Showed her what the country was.
I guess.

Boy out there, his name is Jim,
No one I like more'n him;
He knows everything they is,
"Guess I understand *my bis*"
Jim says.

Said he wondered if I need
Any good popcorn-ball seed.

Some he knowed was good to plant;
First got his start from his aunt
In a cup

Jim, he give me twenty grains,
Said to plant it 'fore it rains,
An' the balls would be, he said,
'Most as big as my pa's head—
Rounder, tho'.

Willie Smith—I bet you he
'Ll be a-wantin' seed from me,
When he sees 'em on the stalk
In our yard, he'll talk and talk.
Ho, ho!